



HOW YOUR EATING HABITS AFFECT YOUR HEALTH

A new study shows how the things you eat can influence your risk of dying from heart disease, stroke, or type 2 diabetes. The findings suggest ways to change your eating habits to improve your health.

Experts already know that a healthy eating plan includes vegetables, fruits, whole grains, and fat-free or low-fat dairy products. A healthy diet also includes lean meats, poultry, fish, beans, eggs, and nuts. It limits saturated and trans fats, sodium, and added sugars.

Scientists analyzed how these 10 dietary factors affect your risk of death from heart disease, stroke, and type 2 diabetes. These are known as cardiometabolic diseases. The team relied on data from the CDC's National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey (NHANES) and national mortality data.

THE RESULTS

The scientists found that risk of death from the 3

diseases was higher for those who consumed too much sodium, processed meat, sugar-sweetened beverages, and unprocessed red meat. Risk of death was also higher among those who didn't eat enough nuts and seeds, seafood omega-3 fats, vegetables, fruits, whole grains, or polyunsaturated fats. According to the analysis, nearly half (45%) of deaths in 2012 from the 3 diseases was associated with too much or too little of these 10 dietary factors.

"This study establishes the number of cardiometabolic deaths that can be linked to Americans' eating habits, and the number is large," explains Dr. David Goff, a heart disease and public health expert at NIH. "Second, it shows how recent reductions in those deaths relate to improvements in diet, and this relationship is strong. There is much work to be done in preventing heart disease, but we also know that better dietary habits can improve our health quickly, and we can act on that knowledge by making and building on small changes that add up over time."

A HEALTHY EATING PLAN

A healthy eating plan gives your body the nutrients it needs every day while staying within your daily calorie goal for weight loss. A healthy eating plan also will lower your risk for heart disease and other health conditions.

A healthy eating plan:

- » Emphasizes vegetables, fruits, whole grains, and fat-free or low-fat dairy products
- » Includes lean meats, poultry, fish, beans, eggs, and nuts
- » Limits saturated and *trans* fats, sodium, and added sugars
- » Controls portion sizes

CALORIES

To lose weight, most people need to reduce the number of calories they get from food and beverages (energy IN) and increase their physical activity (energy OUT).

For a weight loss of 1–1 ½ pounds per week, daily intake should be reduced by 500 to 750 calories. In general:

- » Eating plans that contain 1,200–1,500 calories each day will help most women lose weight safely.
- » Eating plans that contain 1,500–1,800 calories each day are suitable for men and for women who weigh more or who exercise regularly.

Very low calorie diets of fewer than 800 calories per day should not be used unless you are being monitored by your doctor.

